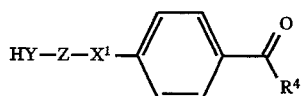


17

single bond; Y is —O—; B is a diradical and is, for example, lower alkylene, arylene, a saturated divalent cycloaliphatic group having from 6 to 12 carbon atoms, alkylenearylene, arylenealkylene or arylenealkylenearylene; and PI is the radical of a photoinitiator according to formula (IV) minus YH.

22. A prepolymer according to claim 19, wherein the components X are each independently of the other NH or a single bond; Y is —O— or —NH—; B is a diradical and is, for example, lower alkylene, arylene or a saturated divalent cycloaliphatic group having from 6 to 12 carbon atoms; and PI is the radical of a photoinitiator according to formula (IV) minus YH.

23. A prepolymer according to claim 19, wherein the photoinitiator PI—YH is a compound of formula (IV)



wherein

Y is —O—, —S— or —NH—;

X<sup>1</sup> is —O—, —NH— or a single bond;

Z is lower alkylene, arylene, a saturated divalent cycloaliphatic group having from 6 to 12 carbon atoms, alkylenearylene, arylenealkylene or arylenealkylenearylene; and

R<sup>4</sup> is a radical of formula (V)



wherein

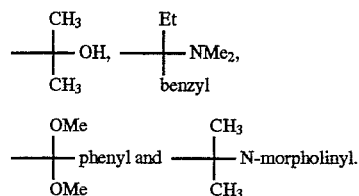
R<sup>5</sup> is lower alkyl or lower alkoxy;

R<sup>6</sup> is selected from lower alkyl, lower alkoxy and aralkyl; and

R<sup>7</sup> is hydroxy, di-lower alkylamino, aryl or azacycloox-alkyl.

18

24. A prepolymer according to claim 23, wherein the radical R<sup>4</sup> is selected from



25. A process for the preparation of a prepolymer according to claim 1, which comprises subjecting a vinyl lactam (a)-lower alkanecarboxylic acid vinyl ester (c) prepolymer to partial or complete acid or alkaline hydrolysis and then derivatising it in a suitable manner, either at the same time or in succession, with a compound derived from a crosslinking component (d) and, optionally, with a compound derived from a vinylic photoinitiator component (e).

26. A hydrogel consisting essentially of a prepolymer disclosed according to claim 1 in crosslinked form.

27. A polymeric network consisting essentially of a prepolymer disclosed according to claim 1 in crosslinked form.

28. A hydrogel consisting essentially of a prepolymer according to the definition given in claim 1 in crosslinked form, the hydrogel being a contact lens.

29. A contact lens consisting essentially of a prepolymer disclosed according to claim 1 in the crosslinked state.

30. A contact lens obtainable by crosslinking a prepolymer according to claim 1.

31. A moulded article consisting essentially of a prepolymer according to the definition given in claim 1 in the crosslinked state.

32. A moulded article according to claim 31 that is a contact lens.

\* \* \* \* \*